



saturday, november 1, 2014

Bill Snyder Family Stadium, Saturday at 7 p.m.
OKLAHOMA STATE @ NO. 11 K-STATE

the collegian
GAMEDAY GUIDE



GEORGE WALKER | THE COLLEGIAN
Wide receiver **Deante Burton** brings the ball downfield during the game against Texas on Oct. 25, 2014 in Bill Snyder Family Stadium.

The Wildcat defense's second line works through season adversity as family

By EMILIO RIVERA
THE COLLEGIAN

"Family" is a word that is always used to describe K-State football. On the field, there is one unit that epitomizes this relationship unlike any other: the linebackers.

The improvements they have made this year have become evident down the road. From the struggle at Iowa State to the shutout against Texas, the linebackers have come to be a dominant and complete position.

The family structure starts with seniors Dakorey Johnson and Jonathan Truman as the two big brothers, who organize and push their younger sibling into doing exactly what needs to be done.

At the bottom of the structure is freshman Elijah Lee as the little brother, who is in the process of being molded into the type of player the lynch mob needs at linebacker.

"We're all pretty close, we joke around, we all hang out together outside of football," Lee said. "So it's just not an on the field thing, because we're really close as a family. If your teammates aren't that close to you, you'll never learn the ropes or how to play at the position."

Lee understands how his age plays a role in the complex of the position, and knows that he can rely on any of his teammates.

"Everybody is really experienced and no one is really close to my age," Lee said. "But whenever I get out there, I feel like they take care of me and make sure I'm in the right position."

With the help of his teammates, Lee has put himself in the position to be known as



EMILY DESHAZER | THE COLLEGIAN

K-State linebacker **Will Davis** tackles Texas runningback **Johnathan Gray** last Saturday at Bill Snyder Family Stadium. The Wildcats held Gray to 24 yards on 10 attempts in the 23-0 win.

one of the best linebackers off the edge on the team. Lee leads the team with 3.5 sacks on the season, also forcing a fumble with his hard-nosed style.

Improvement isn't something that happens without work, just like building a relationship with teammates. For this group, it started after last season, through the winter and spring where the workouts forced them to improve together.

"We've grown together, it started all the way back in winter conditioning, and it has moved us forward," sophomore Will Davis said. "We've watched film together, we've hung out together — I think it has really helped us jell as a group, and we've become really cohesive that way. I think it is just that we spending so much time together, we're all best friends, so I think that's really helped us."

The preparation and hard-ship that this group has went through has caused the group to become a more crisp unit. They have progressively made less mistakes and have been able to become one of the best second-levels against the rush in the nation.

"The biggest jump for us is just understanding the game better, it's probably evident (to everyone else), and we think it's evident when we watch

film," Davis said. "We're getting our reads better, we're getting to places faster because we know where we're going and what we're supposed to do."

For Truman, one of the defensive captains and leading tackler for the team, confidence isn't something that has run short for the group. He knows everyone in the group can step up when they need to, and that it all stems from the

relationship that they've built.

"We have a lot of talent at our position, I'm just very fortunate to have Will Davis and (Johnson) beside me, and (Lee) and those guys coming in and out of the game," Truman said. "I just have a lot of confidence in those guys and their preparation, they prepare well each week, they care about their teammates. They want to do absolutely everything they can to help the team."

After 23 seasons, it's time to buy into K-State's idea of daily improvement

By TATE STEINLAGE
THE COLLEGIAN

Jonathan Truman heard the reporter's question clear as day as he looked down at his hands thinking of how he would phrase his response. After a few seconds, he glanced back up and answered.

"As a team, we talk about getting better every day, and to this point I think we've done that," he said. "We want to continue doing that."

Straightforward, check. Predictable, check. True? You better believe it.

Ten weeks into the season, K-State (6-1, 4-0) is the only team in the Big 12 that can say it controls its own destiny when it comes to the conference title and College Football Playoff race.

They can say that because they beat Stephen F. Austin and Iowa State despite everyone asking about their clash with SEC powerhouse Auburn.

They can say that because they trampled over one of the nation's top running backs in UTEP's Aaron Jones and out-performed a dangerous Texas Tech offense before ever turning their attention over to Oklahoma.

They can say that because they just endured two grueling



PARKER ROBB | THE COLLEGIAN

Senior defensive end **Ryan Mueller** (44) leads the Wildcats up the ramp and into the locker room following their 23-0 shutout of the Texas Longhorns last Saturday in Bill Snyder Family Stadium.

games in a span of two weeks and came out on top in both, earning their first conference shutout since the peak of the Darren Sproles and Eli Roberson era in 2003 along the way.

"Every game is a different challenge, and I think we kind of like that," Truman said. "We like to have new challenges each week."

K-State players and coach-

es speak about the value of daily improvement like it's the only thing hanging in the balance between them winning or losing — and, in a way, it is.

The cornerstone of this

program isn't a big football cathedral in the form of a stadium. It's not jersey combinations or high-profile recruits. Rather, it's a roster of hard-working, often blue-collar-type players,

who recognize the importance of every day on the calendar as it relates to football.

"Nothing changes for us," head coach Bill Snyder said. "We still take it a day at a time and a snap at a time. They all mean a significant amount. Like I said before, this will be the most important game they will play."

It's easy to talk about the importance of every practice and every game, but Snyder and his staff have done an excellent job at getting their players to buy into the value of actually believing it — and it's easy to see that they do.

"We are trying to get better every day and go out there and improve," senior offensive lineman Drew Liddle said earlier this season. "We are trying to make it about ourselves and not our opponent."

So when Jonathan Truman stands up in front of a dozen recorders and cameras and proclaims that his teammates are focused on the daily grind, there's no reason to doubt him. When Bill Snyder says Oklahoma State is the most important game on their schedule right now, you best believe him.

K-State has given us every reason to believe in their idea of daily improvement. If you haven't yet bought into it, now's the time.

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INDEPENDENT VOICE FOR KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

Numbers never lie: Lee makes impact on K-State defense

By ADAM SUDERMAN
THE COLLEGIAN

As a two-time recipient of the Buck Buchanan award, which is annually given to the top defensive lineman in the Kansas City-metro area, Lee is showing his skills at record pace.

After sacking Stephen F. Austin quarterback Zach Conque in his very first play in a K-State uniform, linebacker Elijah Lee opened the eyes of all 52,830 fans in attendance for the 2014-15 season opener.

The freshman didn't stop there as he tallied one more sack in that game and he's added 1.5 sacks since. He now sits in a second-place tie with former K-State linebacker Mark Simoneau for the most sacks (3.5) as a true freshman.

As he stepped into Manhattan this past summer, it didn't take long for his teammates to take notice of his physical and football attributes.

"He has just been a great student of the game," junior defensive back Morgan Burns said. "He has spent a lot of time with older guys that have been through the system, asking questions and trying to learn the defense. I think that shows a lot of maturity on his part. I think a lot of freshmen come in and expect that they are going to redshirt and wait a year to play. He just shows a lot of poise on the field."

Head coach Bill Snyder acknowledged that the sea-

son-ending injury to linebacker Charneachealle Moore played a role in Lee's presence on the field, but he was more than happy to give the Blue Springs, Missouri native an opportunity to play as a freshman.

"Elijah has done well," Snyder said. "He is making improvements. He is going to be a very fine player. He was good enough as a freshman to move up to the backup role at the onset of the season. The more playing time he gets, the better he gets. I think it is an accumulation of a lot of things. He is a talented guy and he runs around and makes plays. He is a bright young fellow."

Regardless of how the depth chart set up, Lee was motivated to make his coaches aware of his ability even if he was only an 18-year-old pass rusher.

"I came in thinking I was going to redshirt," the freshman linebacker said. "Then throughout the summer and camp, I decided that if I worked hard, there would be no way they could keep me off of the field."

Playing time became even more realistic for the pass-rushing specialist when linebackers coach Mike Cox asked Lee to step into the first-team defense in a practice before the season started.

"Toward the end (of pre-season camp), coach Cox was like, 'Elijah, go in,'" Lee said. "I said, 'me?' Because I thought Mike (Moore) and I were just sharing reps and he told me



PARKER ROBB | THE COLLEGIAN

Freshman linebacker **Elijah Lee** (9), assisted by sophomore defensive end **Jordan Willis**, tackles Texas quarterback **Tyrone Swoopes** for a ten yard loss on third down during the second quarter of the Wildcats' 23-0 shutout of the Texas Longhorns Oct. 25, 2014, at home.

to get out there and it was my turn."

As soon as word came that he would be able to play as a true freshman and not redshirt, he was able to make a phone call he'll never forget.

"That was the first thing (that happened)," Lee said. "Coach Cox said, 'Elijah, I want you to call your parents and make sure it's okay.' I called my mom because that's who I'm really close to and I told her. She was hooping and hollering through the phone. I called my dad and he told me that he knew I could do it."

Life at home has traveled with Lee to the Little Apple as he said he fields roughly 30 texts and five or six missed calls after each game. With a smile, he said Twitter notifications provide plenty of support from the purple-clad faithful at K-State.

With the positivity came a few negative comments as

well, but it has only added fuel to his fire.

"You see all this stuff on social media about how I had this very little chance (to come and play right away)," Lee said. "I took that in and told myself that I can't let them guess as to what I was going to be able to do or predict what I was going to be able to do. I try to come

"I decided that if I worked hard, there would be no way they could keep me off of the field."

ELIJAH LEE
LINEBACKER, KANSAS STATE

out and give my all to show anything is possible."

As one of three products from Blue Springs High School

this year (joined by safety Kaleb Prewett and running back Dalvin Warmack), the trio upholds a strong reputation of football from the Blue Springs version of the Wildcats.

The school has two players currently in the NFL in Kansas City Chiefs offensive tackle Donald Stephenson and San Francisco 49ers' wide receiver Brandon Lloyd. They also have seven players who are currently playing at the NCAA D-I or D-III level.

Lee gave credit to high school head coach Kelly Donohoe as a guiding force behind his high school's program success and carries advice from him to this day.

"He said, 'keep your motor going,'" Lee said. "Because when your motor's going, it's hard to stop you."

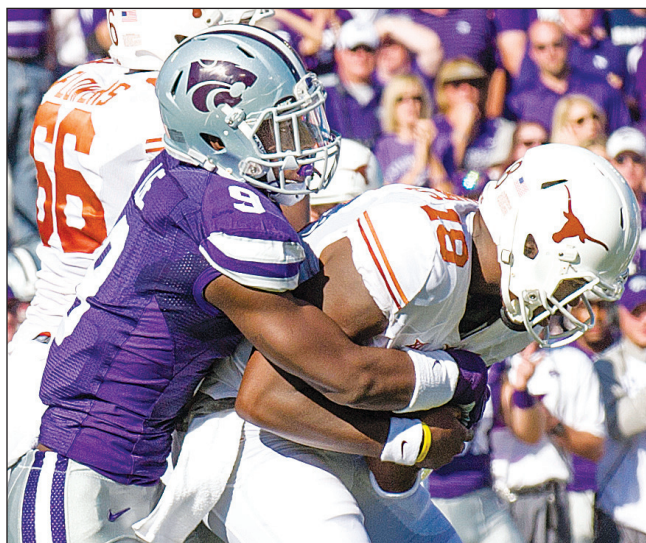
Sophomore linebacker Will Davis said Lee makes daily impressions with the strength and speed of the

above-mentioned motor.

"He definitely does not act like a true freshman walking around the complex or at practice," Davis said. "He brings the same mindset that a junior or senior would. I feel like his biggest upside is his maturity that he brings every day. He is never down or out like a normal freshman might be some days after a bad practice or a bad play."

With years of successful linebackers lining the K-State history books, Lee is ready to build upon an already successful first year in Manhattan. If he keeps up at his current pace, Snyder is excited to see what his freshman phenom can offer the rest of this season and beyond.

"Right now, it is at the level of needing experience," Snyder said. "Every repetition he gets in practice, every repetition he gets in a game, just adds to his strength."



EMILY DESHAZER | THE COLLEGIAN

K-State linebacker **Elijah Lee** sacks Texas quarterback **Tyrone Swoopes** on Saturday at Bill Snyder Family Stadium. K-State sacked Swoopes twice as they shut out the Longhorns.

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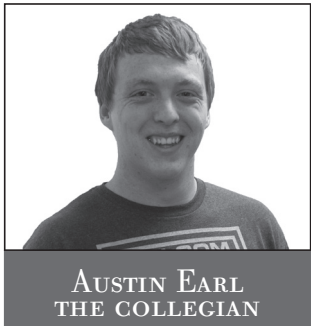
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Big 12 midyear awards: Petty knocked out of offensive player of the year



TAYLOR ALDERMAN | THE COLLEGIAN

Then junior wide receiver **Tyler Lockett** gets tripped up by TCU former cornerback **Jason Verrett** on Nov. 16, 2013 at Bill Snyder Family Stadium.

AUSTIN EARL
THE COLLEGIAN

Offensive player of the year: TCU QB Trevone Boykin

TCU's offense was dreadful in 2013, but Boykin has taken over as full-time quarterback and performed quite nicely. He is second in the Big 12 in passing touchdowns and yards per game.

Boykin was mistake prone in his freshman and sophomore seasons, but now in his junior year, he seems to have put the pieces together. He has 21 touchdowns with just three interceptions through seven games.

His new throwing ability makes him incredibly dangerous

because last season his biggest asset was his legs. Now, he has both options at his disposal. He has chosen to move the ball through the air most often this season, but opponents cannot forget about his ground game.

The Horned Frogs have two stout defenses left on their schedule in K-State and Texas. If Boykin continues to put up big numbers against those two, as well as in the other three games, he could find himself on the Heisman ballot at the end of the season.

Honorable mentions: West Virginia QB Clint Trickett, Baylor RB Shock Linwood

Defensive player of the year: Kansas LB Ben Heeney

Heeney has been a solid player for his entire career. He's led his team in tackles in his sophomore and junior seasons and leads his team in tackles this season as well.

Heeney has taken his play to a new level in 2014. In just seven games, he has racked up 84 tack-

les and 10 tackles for loss. His 12 tackles per game are the most in the power five conferences. He also has 1.5 sacks and an interception on the season.

Heeney has great instincts that take him to the ball on nearly every play. He does not have elite athletic attributes, but he plays hard and makes every play that comes at him.

What is unfortunate for Heeney is that he's the best player on a bad defense. His production gets overshadowed by the overall failures of the team. If he keeps up the level of play he has shown so far this season, it will be a shame if he does not earn numerous accolades. **Honorable mentions:** TCU LB Paul Dawson, Baylor DE Shawn Oakman, Oklahoma DB Zack Sanchez

Coach of the year: West Virginia coach Dana Holgorsen

What Holgorsen has done this season is nothing short of incredible. Last season, West Virginia was the second worst team

in the Big 12. They only won four games the entire season. This year, the Mountaineers have won six of their first eight games. One of those games was an upset of previously undefeated Baylor.

Under Holgorsen's leadership, senior quarterback Clint Trickett is having the best season of his career. In an injury riddled 2013 season, he had just one game that he threw more touchdowns than interceptions. This season, Trickett has just five interceptions and 17 touchdowns. It is easy to point to Holgorsen's offensive mind as the reason for the turnaround.

West Virginia still controls their own destiny in the Big 12. They have just one conference loss and play the only undefeated conference team, K-State, on Nov. 20. The Mountaineers also have TCU on their schedule. Their other two games look like they could be fairly easy victories with Texas and Kansas. **Honorable mentions:** TCU head coach Gary Patterson, K-State head coach Bill Snyder

Newcomer of the year: Baylor WR KD Cannon

If you look up explosive in the Merriam-Webster's Dictionary, chances are you will see a picture of KD Cannon. He was a top recruit coming out of high school and has already shown why this season. The freshman leads Baylor in receptions, receiving yards and receiving touchdowns.

The Bears' offense is elite, so Cannon is not the only talented player on the team. He's just one part of a very good whole. It's no small feat to lead Baylor in those categories. Cannon's senior teammate Antwan Goodley was an All-American last season and led the Big 12 in receiving touchdowns.

Cannon is all about speed. He can burn any cornerback in the conference. He's a dangerous player that should continue to make noise throughout conference play.

Honorable mention: Oklahoma State WR Tyreek Hill

Most intriguing storyline: K-State and TCU's race for the Big 12 title

Most people expected that the Big 12 would be a two-team race in Oklahoma and Baylor. They also thought that the conference would be decided when the two teams face off on Nov. 8. Where those people were wrong was their prediction on what two teams would be playing in that game on that date. Instead of Baylor and Oklahoma, all eyes will be on K-State when it travels to Fort Worth to face TCU.

Both the Wildcats and Horned Frogs have huge games left on their schedule and if either of them run the table, the Big 12 should have a representative in the first College Football Playoff.

Austin Earl is a sophomore in fishing, wildlife and conservation biology. Please send comments to sports@kstatecollegian.com.

Week 10 games to watch: Two nationally televised games highlight conference slate

By TATE STEINLAGE
THE COLLEGIAN

It was a wild week 9 around the Big 12 despite the lack of any major upset. K-State shutout a Big 12 foe for the first time in 11 years and Oklahoma State continued to shoot itself in the foot in a spiral down the standings. Oh, and TCU put up 82 points against Texas Tech, more than what their men's basketball team scored in all but one game during the 2013-14 season.

It's unlikely we'll see any other team flirt with the century mark again this season, but it's almost certain we'll get some more exciting matchups as we head down the final stretch of the conference season.

While you wait for No. 11 K-State and Oklahoma State to kickoff at 7 p.m. from Bill Snyder Family Stadium Saturday, here's what to know before the 10th week of the season.

TCU vs. W

No. 10 TCU vs. No. 20 West Virginia 2:30 p.m., ABC/ESPN2 (Line: TCU -6)

All things considered, this season has been the Trevone Boykin show.

The junior quarterback for TCU has been nothing short of phenomenal, passing for 2,306 yards and 21 touchdowns to just three interceptions through seven games. He's a Heisman contender and the leader behind this surprisingly lethal Horned Frogs offense.

Boykin will lead TCU into Morgantown, West Virginia to take on the Mountaineers Saturday. Liked their opponent, West Virginia has enjoyed the services of their signal caller, senior Clint Trickett.

Trickett has thrown for 2,763 yards and 17 touchdowns to just five picks. He'll need to add to those numbers significantly if the Mountaineers hope to remain in the Big 12 title hunt. TCU's defense hasn't been up to par recently,

but they'll challenge Trickett and his outstanding senior wide receiver Kevin White.

If you're looking for two of the country's best quarterbacks, you won't want to miss this one.

OU vs. STATE

No. 19 Oklahoma vs. Iowa State 11 a.m., FOX Sports 1 (Line: Oklahoma -16)

This wasn't where the Sooners expected to be prior to the season. This was supposed to be Oklahoma's year to run the table, capture a Big 12 title and trot off into the sunset with a potential College Football Playoff trophy in hand.

However, the reality is that the Sooners are 5-2 and all-but eliminated from playoff contention and outside shots to be in the Big 12 title mix come seasons' end.

Still, Bob Stoops' squad isn't one to lay down. After a heartbreaking 31-30 home loss to No. 11 K-State almost two week ago, Oklahoma is like-

ly rearing to go Saturday in Ames, Iowa, where the season narrative is much of the same.

Iowa State hasn't been able to establish an identity. They're 2-5 on the year and winless in conference play. Junior quarterback Sam Richardson has been a solid contributor, but has had little help around him.

Richardson and company will be tasked with keeping up with Oklahoma sophomore quarterback Trevor Knight, freshman running back Samaje Perine and junior wide receiver Sterling Shepard, who have led the Sooners all season in their respective categories.

Oklahoma is the heavy favorite, but as K-State fans know, Jack Trice Stadium is never an easy place to play at.

TX vs. TT

Texas vs. Texas Tech, 6:30 p.m., FOX Sports 1

It's been a rough year for head coaches Kliff Kingsbury and Charlie Strong.

Kingsbury has dealt with mistakes on the field at Texas Tech in the form of penalties. Charlie Strong, on the other hand, has dealt with mistakes off the field at Texas in the form of team violations.

Either way, both situations have resulted in a 3-5 start in 2014 for the Red Raiders and Longhorns.

Texas Tech's defense isn't good, but no one expected that it was 785-yards-in-the-form-of-82-points not good. Even with a quality quarterback in sophomore Davis Webb, the Red Raiders stood no chance against TCU.

Texas didn't allow anywhere near those numbers last weekend against K-State, but then again, they couldn't even come away with points. It was the first time since 2004 that the Longhorns were held scoreless.

With so many uncertainties surrounding these two teams, one thing is for sure: this is a must win for both teams if they have any hope of making a bowl game this season.

KU vs. BU

Kansas vs. No. 12 Baylor 3 p.m., FOX Sports 1 (Line: Baylor -36)

Kansas is not a good football team right now and the last thing it needs is a game against a motivated Baylor team.

The Bears left Morgantown, West Virginia two weeks ago scratching their heads just a week after celebrating a stunning, come-from-behind victory against TCU. The Bears were defeated by the Mountaineers 41-27, tainting their spotless record and position in the Playoff.

Meanwhile, Kansas is just simply trying to win football games under interim head coach Clint Bowen. The Jayhawks have been outscored 117-55 in conference play, and Saturday likely isn't going to help improve that mark.

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College football playoff picture getting crafted through nine weeks



TIMOTHY EVERSON
THE COLLEGIAN

We have entered a new age. Gone are the days of faceless, nameless computers making the definitive decisions on the future of your favorite team.

This past Tuesday, the inaugural College Football Playoff rankings were released to the awaiting masses.

Ever since it was announced two years ago that the new playoff system was being introduced, the anticipation has been tangible and rampant in the college football world. No matter where you went, what you watched or who you talked to, the looming playoff was hovering above like some alien craft ready to abduct us and take us into this new era.

As ESPN rolled through the rankings, gasps that were uttered were sparse. Most were waiting on some earth-shattering moment that would rock the college football world to its core.

People were ready with torch and pitchfork in hand, daring the selection committee to disrupt the balance.

Luckily for those brave souls on the committee, the world remained (at least for now) in equilibrium.

Really though, the first real rankings were pretty uneventful.

Sure, little discrepancies here or there popped up. But nothing so far has incited the rage of the rash (and slightly entitled) college football fan.

Just looking at the top 10, there is a pretty decent sample size of teams.

The mighty SEC West has four, the Big 12 has two, the ACC, Pac-12 and Big Ten have one and Notre Dame closes it out.

Let's start with the Irish.

Coach Brian Kelly's bunch are off to a nice start with senior quarterback Everett Golson leading the team.

Notre Dame's biggest criticism so far is their schedule. They've only played one team who is currently ranked and they lost to them.

We don't know how good the Irish are because we have little

reference. However, that will change with a game at No. 15 Arizona State and a home match-up against No. 25 Louisville in South Bend.

If Notre Dame can survive, they will definitely be in the running, but if one spot is available and it's floating around the top 16 with the Spartans in the best position to get some action at No. 8.

Almost equally as unlikely to land a spot in the playoff is any team from the Big Ten. Michigan State, Ohio State and Nebraska are all floating around the top 16 with the Spartans in the best position to get some action at No. 8.

The Big Ten, however, is really bad beyond these top teams. The middle and bottom of their conference is worse than any other power five conference and the top is average at best.

Michigan State does have one of the best losses in the country with a head-to-head against Oregon, but don't count on the Spartans to make any charge into the playoff without some serious help from the other conferences.

Joining the Big Ten near the bottom of the heap is the ACC.

The only reason why the ACC is better than the Big Ten and has a better shot to be represented in the playoff is simple. They have the defending national champion in Florida State, whose quarterback is the defending Heisman winner.

Still, Florida State isn't really that impressive.

They barely walked away from a mid- to low-level Big 12 team in Oklahoma State, they had to have overtime to escape a Clemson team who has no real business being in the top 25 and they struggled with a Notre Dame team which, as I've mentioned, is still kind of a mystery.

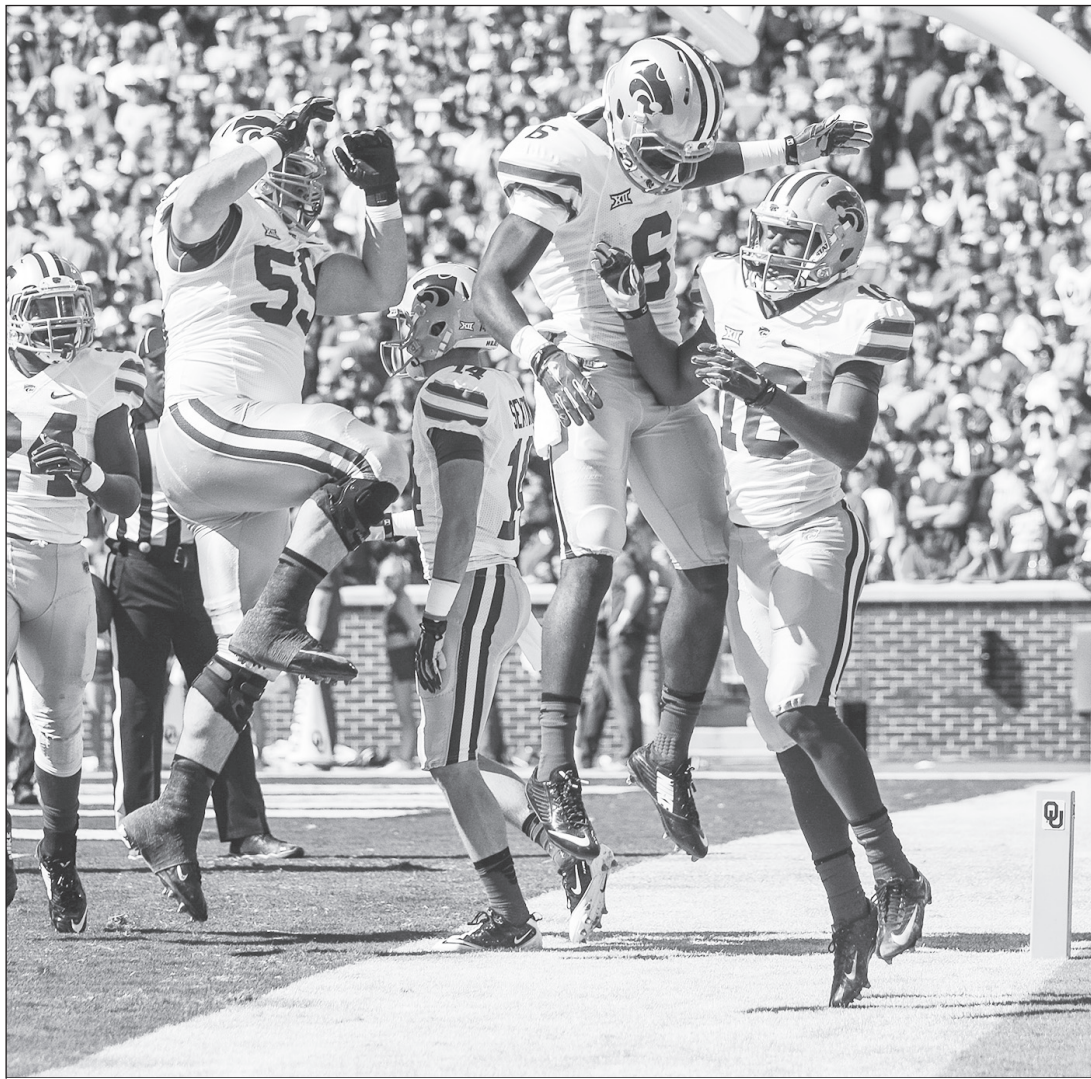
However, if they can get past Louisville, they will have a gentle stroll through their last four games.

In the Pac-12 however, things get a little better with a little sand, surf, sunshine and (most importantly) good football.

Pac-12 North deity Oregon is still sitting atop of their throne. There really is no real competition for the boys from Eugene in their division.

However, the south is a different, more fun animal.

Arizona, who gave Oregon its only loss, Arizona State and Utah are all contending for a shot to take on Oregon and possibly



PARKER ROBB | THE COLLEGIAN

Senior wide receiver **Tyler Lockett** (16) celebrates with sophomore wide receiver **Dante Burton** (6) and junior left tackle **Cody Whitehair** (55) following his 9-yard touchdown reception to put the Wildcats up 21-14 in the second quarter of the No. 14-ranked Wildcats' 31-30 upset of the No. 11-ranked Sooners on Oct. 18 at Gaylord Family Memorial Stadium in Norman, Oklahoma.

ride that one-loss train all the way to playoff town.

The Utes and Sun Devils play on Saturday which will clear that picture a little bit and Arizona plays both schools near the end of the season.

Continuing on the trend of good football being played from multiple schools, the Big 12 has planted its flag as a serious contender for a playoff spot.

TCU has the easiest road, having already played Oklahoma and Baylor but, the Frogs have West Virginia, a contender in their own right, and K-State to beat if they want a shot at not only a playoff spot, but their first Big 12 title.

K-State, while undefeated, has a murder's row of opponents comparable to the lineup of New York Yankees in the late 1920s.

The Wildcats still have to play No. 7 TCU in Fort Worth, Texas; No. 22 West Virginia in Morgantown, West Virginia; and No. 13 Baylor in Waco, Texas.

If the Wildcats get through all of that and are still able to walk, they deserve some oxygen, a Big 12 title and a shot at their first national championship.

Finally, we have the big daddy of the college football world: the SEC.

Three of the top four teams in the rankings are SEC teams and are all west division teams to be precise. For now, there should be little argument as to why they are there.

One is undefeated Mississippi State and the other two are Ole Miss and Auburn. Alabama, however, is knocking on the door right behind them.

Here's the dirty little secret of having all of those great teams in one division, though: eventually, they cannibalize each other.

Like the great years of the Big 12 South in the mid-2000s, the upper crust of the SEC will equalize with everyone else. Only two of those teams have played each other so far.

There is little to no way that you will see three SEC teams in the playoff. Seasons would have to swing terribly off course to make that a serious reality.

Controversy will show itself soon enough, no matter what postseason system is in place.

With all of the memories of the defunct BCS behind us, we are living history.

The four teams chosen to represent the collegiate world in the first College Football Playoff will be etched in stone and forever be remembered for being first in a world that where being truly first in anything is extremely rare.

The players have been chosen and the stage has been set. The four spots are there for the taking, just waiting for someone to make history happen.

Timothy Everson is a sophomore in mass communications. Please send all comments to sports@kstatecollegian.com.

Q-and-A with O'Colly sports editor Kieran Steckley

By ADAM SUDERMAN
THE COLLEGIAN

Q: Youth was the story for this team heading into 2014-15, but an impressive showing against Florida State changed perspective rather quickly. Where is this team compared to what was witnessed in Dallas?

A: The simple answer is back down to Earth. I didn't think Oklahoma State would come remotely close to beating Florida State, but it did. That game raised a lot of expectations. In many fans' eyes, caution turned to hype. This team went from mediocre Big 12 team to conference contender instantly. But we have seen in recent weeks that this team is just not ready to compete at the

top of the conference. The Cowboys are too young and too inexperienced at key positions. It is talented enough to make a bowl game, but it won't be easy with the schedule coming up (at K-State, versus Texas, at Baylor and at Oklahoma).

Q: Have you ever seen someone as fast and as explosive as Tyreek Hill? What do you know about his journey to Stillwater, Oklahoma and when did you first get to see him in action?

A: There is no one in college football as fast and explosive as Tyreek Hill. He can hit the corner and get around the edge better than anyone I have ever seen. He is a junior college transfer from Garden City Community College. He has always been more of a track athlete

than a football player and it seems this season he has taken a big step in learning proper techniques and becoming more of a football player, as opposed to a track athlete in pads.

Q: QB injuries are obviously a significant blow and it's true for Mike Gundy and his staff. What's the outlook for J.W. Walsh and what has been the biggest surprise with how Daxx Garman has adjusted to the starting job?

Walsh is likely out for the season with a leg injury (anything more specific than that would be speculation because Gundy doesn't discuss injuries). Now, Walsh has been ruled out for the season before and come back (2012), so I wouldn't rule anything out.

As far as Garman goes,

I don't know if surprise is the right word, but we had heard stories about how good his arm is, but had never seen it. Well, he finally put it on display this season and it's a cannon. He throws the deep ball better than any other throw on the route tree. What's surprising is that he has not shown the ability to throw the intermediate and short balls with consistency.

Q: Oklahoma State wins on Saturday if _____?

The offensive line opens lanes for Hill and protects Garman better than it has all year. Also, the defense will have to force a few turnovers, possibly return one for a touchdown.

Q: Score prediction?

K-State 31
Oklahoma State 13



COURTESY OF THE O'COLLY
Oklahoma State's O'Colly sports editor, Kieran Steckley.

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Gundy, his Cowboys will be looking to rebound offensively in Manhattan

By ADAM SUDERMAN
THE COLLEGIAN

With only 19 points in its last two games, Oklahoma State is still searching for a way to rebound offensively. For K-State head coach Bill Snyder, he hopes the Cowboys' breakout performance waits until the second Saturday of November.

"They have had some injuries that have impacted their offensive line and running back," Snyder said. "I do not know if they feel like they have been playing as well on offense, but when I look at them they look pretty good."

After losing 11 starters with at least 15 career starts, Oklahoma State was picked to finish in the middle of the pack in Big 12 preseason polls.

Due to a season-opening, closer-than-expected performance against Florida State, expectations for the 2014-15 Cowboys have been far from steady. They've ranged anywhere from a rebuilding project to a top-15 team nationally.

The team achieved the latter expectation when it rattled off five-straight wins after losing to Florida State, but all three conference wins came against the bottom three teams in Texas Tech, Iowa State and Kansas.

Now, after losing back-to-back games to No. 7 TCU and No. 22 West Virginia by a combined 57 points, the Cowboys will be greeted by No. 11 K-State at 7 p.m. Saturday night in Bill Snyder Family Stadium.

"Essentially, if you go back a couple of weeks all the way through the schedule, you're either playing a top-20 team or a team that's developing and has really good players," head coach Mike Gundy said at his local weekly press



PARKER ROBB | THE COLLEGIAN

K-State wide receiver **Kyle Klein** attempts to break the tackle of an Oklahoma State player at the end of the second quarter of the Wildcats' game against Oklahoma State in Stillwater, Oklahoma, Saturday afternoon. The Wildcats went on to score a touchdown and increased their lead to 29-23.

conference. "Each week is going to be a real challenge for us."

Defensive coordinator Glenn Spencer and his unit were the first to hold West Virginia quarterback Clint Trickett under 300 yards this season in a 34-10 loss last Saturday, but they'll be challenged in a new way with K-State senior quarterback

Jake Waters.

As one of the better dual-threat quarterbacks in the conference, he's an animal of a different breed and Spencer said his defense understands the upcoming challenges.

"He knows where seams and alleys are and has the run-pass option about every play and the one time your eyes are wrong, he is going to get

you," Oklahoma State defensive coordinator Glenn Spencer said. "It's option football. It's just a different way to run it. Sometimes he has the ball in his hand as the runner, as opposed to the option when he is pitching it backwards. He's running it and has the option to pitch it forward and throw the ball. It's a big challenge for us as it has been to every-

body that has played him."

As a third-year contributor, cornerback Kevin Peterson has gained plenty of perspective as to what K-State will offer offensively. Even though a different quarterback was under center for the Wildcats two years ago, the Oklahoma State junior doesn't expect much change from the first opportunity he

had to see Snyder's pro-style offense.

"They're going to do the same thing they (always) do," cornerback Kevin Peterson said. "They're going to give the tight end the ball, and the quarterback is really smart. They're really physical and they have a lot of speed so we'll try to do the best we can to slow them down."

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Big 12 offensive power rankings: TCU quarterback Trevone Boykin rockets up list



EMILIO RIVERA
THE COLLEGIAN

No. 1: West Virginia QB Clint Trickett (Last week: 1)

Consistency is the key for the senior signal-caller for the Mountaineers. Trickett resembles a custom-made quarterback that you would make on a video game due to the incredible numbers he's posting this season. He has only thrown for under, yes under, 300 yards once and that was last week against Oklahoma State.

While he may not have the speed and mobility of other quarterbacks in the league, his arm is what separates him from the rest of the list. Lucky for Trickett, he has a big-play specialist in Kevin White at wide receiver. Trickett makes this offense dangerous on every play, which will be key as the season winds down.

No. 2: TCU QB Trevone Boykin (Last week: 5)

If Trickett is how you make a pure-passing quarterback on a video game, Boykin is what would happen if you slid all of the skills to 99. He is just that good. The junior has deceptive speed and footwork for a quarterback and he is the leading Big 12 quarterback in rushing yards with 374. He also leads the conference in total offense,



EMILY DESHAZER | THE COLLEGIAN

K-State quarterback **Jake Waters** looks to pass last Saturday at Bill Snyder Family Stadium. Waters was 19-23 and had 224 passing yards.

averaging 382.9 yards per game.

Boykin, who has constantly been overlooked in his career, is making the conference take notice of his skill, throwing for 433 yards and seven touchdowns against Texas Tech. He has also broken the school record for touchdowns and points scored in a game. If he continues at this pace, the Horned Frogs are on pace for a potential playoff berth and maybe a chance to bring a Heisman to Fort Worth, Texas.

No. 3: Baylor QB Bryce Petty (Last week: 2)

This is the second week in a row where Petty has slipped in the rankings. He looked unstoppable at the beginning of the season, but has shown signs of inconsistency through the last several games. The problem started with his back injury and the pain that it caused him afterwards.

Petty has the issue of not being able to sustain his performances from week to week. He can throw for over 500 yards one week, only to answer with 200 yards the next. There certainly is no lack of weapons due to the presence of KD Cannon, who appears to be the front-runner for Big 12 rookie of the year.

Along with Cannon, Petty needs to work closer with sophomore running back Shock Linwood.

No. 4: K-State QB Jake Waters (Last week: 3)

While Waters' health may raise a question or two, it shouldn't be too concerning when realizing that nearly every player on the field is dealing with different ailments at this point of the season. Waters still has an ample amount of zoom to the ball when he throws it and he is making the right passes as he is yet to throw a Big 12 interception.

However, he does have the tendency to try to force the ball into spaces that he shouldn't. Some balls are thrown right to defenders and he probably should have more interceptions than he currently does, but he does have top notch wide receivers who can play some keep away.

No. 5: West Virginia WR Kevin White (Last week: 4)

In shutting down White, Oklahoma State did something that no one has been able to do this season. White looked nearly unstoppable going into the game, having over 100 yards in every game and 1,047 total yards and eight touchdowns. Against the Cowboys, he could only reel in three receptions for 27 yards, but extended his touchdown streak to six games.

Emilio Rivera is a sophomore in mass communications. Please send comments to sports@kstatecollegian.com.

By the numbers

By AUSTIN EARL
THE COLLEGIAN

0

Interceptions thrown by senior Jake Waters in conference games

While Waters has thrown three interceptions this season, none of them have been in games against other Big 12 teams. The last time he threw one was against Auburn on Sept. 18. The Cowboys have intercepted eight passes this season, which is ranked 40th in the nation.

8

Sacks by defensive end Emmanuel Ogbah

The Cowboys' sophomore pass rusher has been a disruptive force on defense. His eight sacks are tied for the most in the Big 12. K-State's offensive line will have their hands full with him.

22.4

Average yards gained by K-State on each punt return

The Wildcats' punt return unit is the second-best in the nation behind Auburn. They have just one touchdown on a punt return, but are often able to get better field position because of the unit. Oklahoma State averages 8.1 yards per punt return, which is 62nd in the nation.

24

Sacks by Oklahoma State this season

The Cowboys are the Big 12's second best team at getting to the quarterback. The team has got to the quarterback 24 times in their eight games. The Wildcats are the worst at rushing the passer in the Big 12. They have just nine sacks this year.

25

Penalties committed by K-State in 2014

The Wildcats 25 penalties are the fewest of any power conference team. They have been penalized for just 207 yards, which is the fewest of any FBS team. Oklahoma State has been penalized 49 times for 426 yards this season.

28

Minutes per game the Cowboys controls the ball

Oklahoma State controls the ball for the second fewest minutes per game in the Big 12. K-State averages 33:12 with the ball per game, which is the most in the conference.

41.3

Average net yardage of each Oklahoma State punt

Flipping the field on punts is an important part of the game, and the Cowboys are the best at it in the conference. K-State averages just 34.0 net yards per punt, worst in the Big 12.

50.5

Percent of the time the Wildcats convert on third down

K-State has converted on 47 of their 93 third downs this season. The 50.5 percent conversion rate is the seventh best in the nation. Oklahoma State converts on just 36.2 percent of their third downs, 101st in the country.

99.3

Rushing yards per game allowed by K-State

The Wildcats statistically have the best rushing defense in the Big 12. In fact, they allow the eighth fewest rushing yards per game in the country. Oklahoma State averages 156.3 yards per game which is 71st in the nation.

150.25

All-purpose yards per game averaged by junior Tyreek Hill

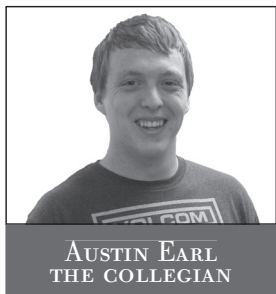
Oklahoma State's Tyreek Hill is one of the most versatile players in the country. He leads the Big 12 in all-purpose yards and is 14th in the nation in the same category.

Big 12 sports editor picks

The campus sports editors of the conference release the week 10 edition of their power rankings

- No. 1
TCU
- No. 2
K-STATE
- No. 3
WEST VIRGINIA
- No. 4
OKLAHOMA
- No. 5
OKLAHOMA STATE
- No. 6
BAYLOR
- No. 7
TEXAS
- No. 8
IOWA STATE
- No. 9
TEXAS TECH
- No. 10
KANSAS

Big 12 defensive power rankings: Heeney maintains hold of No. 1 spot



AUSTIN EARL
THE COLLEGIAN

No. 1: Kansas LB Ben Heeney (Last week: 1)

Kansas will face Baylor this weekend and Heeney has the opportunity for a lot of tackles because the Bears run the ball more than anyone else in the conference. The chances that his team pulls the upset are infinitesimal, but Heeney could have a great individual performance on Saturday.

No. 2: TCU LB Paul Dawson (Last week: 2)

TCU's offense grabbed the headlines on against Texas Tech, but Dawson had a very impressive game too. He had 11 total tackles and two tackles for loss in the contest.

Dawson's game last week moved him into first in the conference in tackles for loss per game. He is also tied for seventh in the nation in the same category. He has stayed steady in second in the conference in tackles behind Heeney, but averages the most tackles in conference matchups.

The Horned Frogs face

a tough road test when they visit Morgantown, West Virginia on Saturday. The Mountaineers have a solid offense and have already upset Baylor at home this season. Dawson's play is crucial for his team and if he isn't at the top of his game, TCU could be on upset alert.

No. 3: Baylor DE Shawn Oakman (Last week: 3)

Both teams will be coming off a bye week when Kansas travels to Waco, Texas on Saturday and Oakman could have a field day. The Jayhawks are last in the conference in scoring, total offense, passing offense, and they are eighth in rushing offense.

No. 4: Oklahoma CB Zack Sanchez (Last week: 4)

The Sooners will be back in action this week and face Iowa State in Ames, Iowa. The Cyclones have their fair share of offensive problems and are eighth in the conference in scoring.

Junior quarterback Sam B. Richardson has thrown an interception in all but one of Iowa State's conference games this season. Oklahoma has won every game in which Zack Sanchez has had a takeaway. It may not be crucial that he gets one on Saturday, but it definitely would not hurt his team's cause.

No. 5: K-State LB Jonathan Truman (Last week: 5)

Truman did not have an individually spectacular game last week against Texas, but he did lead the team with eight tackles. He didn't accumulate any other statistics. What Truman was apart of against the Longhorns was special, though.

The Wildcats' defense had a shutout and they also held Texas to just 90 yards on the ground and 106 yards through the air. He is the heart and soul of the defense that put up that impressive performance. The team would not be the same without him.

Truman and K-State face Oklahoma State this week and while the Cowboys have been ranked this season, they are not a great team. They have lost their last two games by a combined 57 points and their offense has scored a combined 19 points in the contests.

Oklahoma State is 71st in the nation in running the ball, which is what the Wildcats specialize in stopping. If Truman and his team keep playing at a high level, it could make their opponent one dimensional very quickly.

Austin Earl is a sophomore in fishing, wildlife and conservation biology. Please send comments to sports@kstatecollegian.com.

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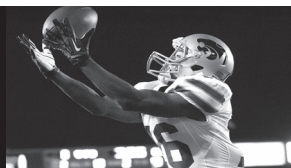
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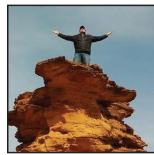
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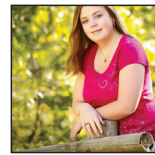
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